

THE STATUS OF *SALIX PELLITA* (SALICACEAE) IN  
NEW YORK STATE

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ABSTRACT

The only record of *Salix pellita* in New York is based on a single sterile herbarium specimen. Visits to the collection locality revealed that the specimen is misidentified, and the taxon remains undocumented in the state flora.

Key Words: *Salix pellita*, Bergen Swamp, New York

*Salix pellita* Anderss., satiny willow, is primarily an eastern Canadian species, with disjunct populations in the northeastern United States. The species is rare in Michigan (Voss, 1985) and Vermont (Thompson, 1989), but is more frequent along riparian corridors in northern New Hampshire (Pease, 1964) and in northern Maine. New York reports of *Salix pellita* (Mitchell, 1986; Clemants, 1989) are founded on a single collection made in 1944, from a sphagnum bog at Bergen Swamp, Genesee County (*White & Matthews s.n.* NYS). The collectors tentatively identified their specimen as *S. candida* Flugge forma *denudata* (Anderss.) Rouleau. In 1948 C. R. Ball annotated the sheet to *Salix pellita*.

The New York collection is sterile, presenting the standard identification difficulties in this variable genus; it is a September collection. The mature herbage is essentially glabrous, and thus closely resembles the hairless forms of three species reported in the state by Mitchell (1986): *Salix candida*, *S. pellita* and *S. viminalis* L. A thorough inventory of Bergen Swamp by Muenscher (1946, 1951) found 15 species of willows, including *Salix candida*, but neither *S. pellita* nor *S. viminalis*.

To relocate New York's only reported station for satiny willow, I visited Bergen Swamp in September 1989. Sphagnum-rich boggy margins were easy to locate in marly openings. Unfortunately, extensive browsing by white-tailed deer had removed most of the available willow foliage from these habitats. Typical *Salix candida* was present, but I found no *S. pellita* and no *S. viminalis*.

In early summer 1990, I revisited the resprouted willows and found typical *Salix candida* was common (*Zika 10847* NYS). Its

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glabrous form was rare (*Zika 10848, 10851* NYS). Both forms were fertile, and thus their identifications were easy to confirm. *Salix candida* forma *denudata*, with pedicels ca. 1 mm in length, was separable from *S. viminalis* which has pedicels < .5 mm long. *Salix candida* forma *denudata* had capsules with curly pubescence and was separable from *S. pellita*, which has straight hairs on the capsules. The herbage of *S. candida* forma *denudata* immediately suggested the sterile collection by White and Matthews at NYS, which was attributed to *S. pellita*.

Seymour (1982) and Voss (1985) indicated *Salix pellita* is found primarily on riverbanks and shores in the United States; my New England observations agree. Only in the Gaspé Peninsula have I seen it in the variety of other habitats noted by Scoggan (1950). Thus the New York habitat, a sphagnum bog, seems improbable for *Salix pellita* at the southern limit of its range.

The solitary sterile New York specimen called *Salix pellita* matches extant material from the collection locality shown to be *Salix candida* forma *denudata*, a superficially similar taxon. With no historical or contemporary data to the contrary, I conclude that *Salix pellita* remains undocumented from New York state.

There remains the possibility that *Salix pellita* still might be found in suitable habitats along the northern reaches of the Hudson River, or on tributaries to the St. Lawrence River in New York. If it is located there, it can safely be considered a new discovery for the state.

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